

Introduced by Senator Torlakson

February 18, 2005

An act to add Section 2190.6 to the Business and Professions Code, relating to medicine.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 524, as introduced, Torlakson. Physicians and surgeons: continuing education.

The Medical Practice Act provides for licensing and regulation of physicians and surgeons by the Medical Board of California, and imposes certain continuing education requirements upon them. A violation of the act is a crime.

This bill would require physicians and surgeons who treat patients for depression and other related ailments to complete a mandatory continuing education course on that subject, thereby creating a new crime and imposing a state-mandated local program. The bill would require the board to verify completion of this requirement through the license renewal process.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) The National Mental Health Association estimates that 19
4 million Americans over 18 years of age, or about 9.5 percent of
5 the population, suffered from a depressive disorder in 1999.

6 (2) According to the United States Food and Drug
7 Administration, approximately 11 million prescriptions for
8 serotonin selective reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and other newer
9 antidepressants for the treatment of depression and other related
10 ailments were written in 2002.

11 (3) California represents approximately 12 percent of the
12 United States population, and it may therefore be reasonably
13 assumed that 2.28 million Californians suffer from a depressive
14 disorder and that about 1.32 million Californians are being
15 treated with an antidepressant medication.

16 (4) Recent research appears to indicate that the fastest growing
17 age group using SSRIs are preschoolers under five years of age
18 and that approximately 70 percent of prescriptions for SSRIs are
19 written by primary care physicians, including pediatricians.

20 (5) There are no standardized treatment protocols for
21 physicians prescribing SSRIs recommending the frequency of
22 visits during initiation, change of dosage, or withdrawal.

23 (b) Accordingly, it is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting
24 this act, to broaden and update the knowledge base of physicians
25 related to the appropriate care and treatment of patients suffering
26 from depression and associated disorders.

27 SEC. 2. Section 2190.6 is added to the Business and
28 Professions Code, to read:

29 2190.6. All physicians and surgeons who treat patients for
30 depression and other related ailments, specifically through the
31 prescribing of serotonin selective reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and
32 other newer antidepressants, shall complete a mandatory
33 continuing education course on that subject. The board shall
34 verify completion of this requirement on the license renewal
35 form.

36 SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
37 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because
38 the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school

1 district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
2 infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the
3 penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section
4 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a
5 crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the
6 California Constitution.

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